538 heaven, are opposed to the bad super-
779 naturals, the Devil and the demons in hell; the right Religion and the Church are set against superstition and lack of religion; good behavior against bad (sin); the idea of the good going to heaven at death against that of the sinful being punished in hell.

577 Ethical values are apparent in the rea-
538 sons given for the destruction of the world and the creation of the Devil, in the actions
[779] of the saints in rewarding good behavior and punishing evil, in the acts of the Devil in sponsoring bad behavior, and in the destiny of the dead.

Taking this concept of good and evil as the main theme, we can give an outline of practically the whole, and certainly the most important part, of Tarascan religious ideas. Nonethical concepts are few and of secondary importance. They are mainly miscellaneous beliefs or tales (in which some natural elements are personified), omens, and so on.

● 773 Creation stories are not common among the Tarascans. In those collected, the con-
538 cept of good and evil is apparent. The duality of the supernatural—God and the
577 saints against the Devil—is explained as the consequence of the bad behavior of one of the sons of God who revolted against his Father and was punished by being made into the Devil. Insubordination and lack of respect for paternal authority are the causes of this punishment.

In several myths about the creation of animals, the good animals are created by God while the bad ones are related to the Devil. Thus, when Jesus and the children of the Devil play making mud figures,
[825] those of Jesus become birds while those of the Devil become "snakes and lizards, and scorpions and all sorts of bad animals". The coyote was a dog which deserted his master, the Devil.

773 Most important are the myths regarding the destruction of the world. In these we
538 have a blend of Spanish and Indian elements in which the Indian motives, nonethical in origin, are reinterpreted and subordinated to the Catholic concept of Good and Evil. A number of stories give two destructions of the world. A first one by water is identified with the Christian flood, although it keeps also some traits of the Mesoamerican flood myth; and a second by fire embodies Indian traits but is identified with the advent of Christianity and the Spanish conquest. Some ver-

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538 sions, however, give only one destruction of the world, equating the flood with the 773 advent of Christianity, or depriving this last event of its catastrophic character.

Flood stories include a typical Mesoamerican tale—that the survivor of the flood was transformed into a dog because he started a fire. Since the cause of the transformation was disobedience to the Christian God, who had forbidden starting a fire without his command, the story thus becomes integrated with the good and evil theme:

[539] ". . . down came the angel and kicked him once and again and said, 'This is so that you understand. You have not obeyed me.' And the man began to cry like a dog and the angel said, 'You will be a dog and in punishment you will have to take care of the house.' And this is why there are dogs."

Several stories and beliefs deal with the *k'uaŋári*, or giants, the people who lived before the advent of Christianity. The k'uaŋári had very great strength. They built what are now the ruins of pre-Spanish sites, and also are supposed to have built the churches and installed the bells; bells were their most precious treasure. They did not believe in the true religion but worshipped idols and stones:

[539] "The ancient people killed people when they had a fiesta and made a feast over that body. That was their custom. They also killed an ox and then they ate it. They covered it with flowers and there they made their fiesta. With the fat of the animal they made candles which they lit for their idols."

The kings of the k'uaŋári set the boundaries of the existing towns and placed the border stones. Some of their deeds are still remembered. They named the towns, they left their imprints on a number of stones, and made war on neighboring kings. The point stressed in the stories is the destruction of these beings because of their lack of religion: they were "unbaptized humans" or "big devils". In order to put an end to this state of affairs, God decided to bless the world. This event is described in some tales as a destruction by fire, in others by water, in the latter case being identified either with the flood or with the formation of Lake Pátzcuaro.

The stories in which the giants are alive before the flood attribute the destruction of the world to their heathenness:

773 539 "T'aiésača are the idols worshipped by ancestors, those who lived before the flood. They had no images [saints]; the t'aiésača were their saints. When God decided to end the world he told Adam and Eve . . . he believed but the others didn't . . ." [At this point in the story the flood occurs.]

Another short statement says:

". . . With the flood the k'uaŋári were extinguished. Don Antonio Siuangua [Jarácuaro's king] was a k'uaŋári. They didn't believe in religion [i.e., Catholicism]; that's why there was the flood. They danced naked and they had no fear of God. I think it was something like those sexy dances they say they have in Morelia or Mexico City where people dance stark naked."

In other stories the giants were destroyed when the world was blessed. Sometimes this is described as a destruction by fire. In some statements God himself came to bless the world and introduce Christianity. In others this task is ascribed to Jesus, Saint James or Saint Peter. In still others, the advent of Christianity was the work of a priest or of Vasco de Quiroga.

When the world was thus blessed, the giants buried themselves with their implements and they became stones, the idols and tools that now come to light when the land is tilled. The reason for their hiding lay in their old religion and failure to accept Christianity:

"They lived in error." "They buried themselves [because] persecuted by the Belief [i.e., Christianity]." "That happened to them because they didn't want to see the blessing of the world."

The more elaborate stories refer to the particular way in which the kings of the k'uaŋári in Jarácuaro and Ihuatzio fled from the Faith to become enchanted in different places. Those who accepted Christianity were saved and became the ancestors of the present people:

"Some people got the blessing from the priest [Don Vasco] while others died alone because of their ignorance. The former are in heaven now while the others are buried with their belongings."

775 The Tarascans firmly believe in man's survival after death. The basis for this belief lies in man's division into body and soul. The soul for the Tarascan resides in the heart, and the word heart (*minzita*) stands also for soul; while the other words

775 (*ánima, uaríča, uarírі*) designate the soul after death and also the dead body, their meaning being like that of the English 'ghost' or 'dead'. The separation of body and soul is possible before death in certain situations.

753 828 Fright is one of the concepts of disease. When a person is frightened his soul is about to leave his body. "My heart [i.e., soul] goes out", he will say, and this is supposed to upset him a good deal. Total loss of one's soul is not very common. It is the result of the Devil's stealing the soul when a person becomes frightened at the sight of him. This loss causes insanity and almost immediate death, unless the person has his soul restored.

775 Also, the soul of a person who is about to die spends a period visiting all the places where he (she) has been and also his (her) relatives. The soul wanders while the person is asleep or feeling very tired. These souls can occasionally be seen by people, and experiences of seeing souls are very common items in folklore, especially in the Sierra where ghosts (*uaríča*) follow men, and by touching, blowing or spitting at them can cause sickness and death.

A very important concept of Tarascan folklore is that of selling one's soul to the Devil, who, in some cases, keeps the soul while the person is still alive. Also, the souls of persons otherwise doomed can be in hell before their death.

761 Death is caused by the final separation of body and soul. The body perishes while the soul goes on existing. The destiny of

775 the dead is explained in a creation story. The Devil, the cleverest son of God,

773 decided that he did not like the sky as God had made it. So he made the sun, the moon and the stars, and also made another sky on top of it, where he resided. God asked him to return home, but the Devil refused. So God sent Saint James, who defeated the Devil and brought him to God.

539 "The Devil asked God for his inheritance and said he also wanted to have people to rule over, the same as God. Then God told him his inheritance was ready, and He ordered Saint James to take the Devil down below, pulling at his chain like an animal. There was a big round iron and a chair to tie him to so he couldn't escape. There the Devil told God he needed some people and God told him, 'Yes, I will give you some. Whom do you want?' And the Devil asked for those who drown in liquor, those who die in sin, those who kill people and

539 those who die in the lake. God told him He wouldn't give him all those, because so many people die like that that there would be nobody left for Him. He would give him only those with great sin. They also agreed that they would weigh those who die in an accident, and if they were heavier than the Devil he would take them; if lighter, God would take them. And this is the agreement they had. All people who die in an accident have to be weighed to see to whom they fall."

773 775 Other stories and statements elaborate further this myth. Two concepts determine this destiny: a mechanical one, according to the circumstances of death and without moral meaning; and a second one wherein the future of the dead is a consequence—reward or punishment—of their behavior in the present world. This last concept prevails.

In what we call the mechanical concept, we include the idea that those who die in an accident (fall, run over by an automobile, etc.), or drown in the lake, go to hell, or have to be weighed in order to determine their destiny. Other ways of meeting death can determine automatically the destiny of the dead person: *e.g.*, death in fights or as result of drunkenness. In this case, however, a moral factor is involved, in that drunkenness and fighting are considered bad or sinful. Similarly, children automatically go to heaven and become little angels. The reason is that they die before they are old enough to commit sin. As one informant puts it: "They don't say *disparates* [obscene, sinful words; swearing] and they have no sins."

As a general rule, however, the destiny of the dead is determined by their good or bad behavior in this world. A balance has to be drawn between a person's good and bad actions to see if his next abode is heaven or hell. A typical statement follows:

[539] "Those who drown are doomed, and also those who die in drunkenness. Those who kill a person are doomed, and the priests do not allow them to confess, except when they take charge of the dead person's children and dress them and look after them as their own father would. Those dead 'in vice' are doomed, too."

The idea of purgatory is not ommon in folk stories and belief, although of course it is taught in church.

[539] "Dead children go to heaven until the age when they learn to swear; they have no sins.

773
775
[539] Grownups, people say some of them go to heaven, but who knows; it is necessary to go through punishment first."

In their journeys to their abode, the dead are brought before God and/or the saints for a sort of judgment which decides their destiny. A few beliefs relate to this judgment before God, and emphasize 'good' behavior toward the fireplace and towards dogs. One should not spit or kick the firestones, because at the hour of death they will go to God and complain about this bad treatment. One reason given [778] is that the hearthstones represent the Holy Cross. Similarly, one should not throw hot water to the ground. The earth will complain to God and say, "This one [825] burned me." A black dog will also complain if badly treated. On the other hand, [735] if one gives alms to beggars, they will speak favorably to God.

Other beliefs concern activities which, if not properly followed on earth, must be carried out after death before eternal rest is granted. Thus the hospital cargueros who do not properly participate in the week-end processions in the churchyard have to do so after death. Penitents who do not carry the heavy cross as they promised similarly have to do this after death. When a child has been baptized, [788] to become *compadres* the parents and godparents must go to the church and perform a ritualized salutation. One does not really become compadre until this has been performed. If one does not make this salutation with one's children's godparents, the soul will have to travel and meet the souls of the compadres-to-be, wherever they are, in order to perform it. Only then will the soul be free to go to its destination. Similarly, taking ashes from the hearth and treating the children well, feeding, washing, and dressing them properly, are sanctioned by the belief that the woman who does not do so on earth will be busy after death making up for her faulty behavior.

The beliefs about the dead and the proper behavior to reach heaven are confirmed in the experiences of people who die but come back to life, because it is found out that their time was not yet come. Thus, as to the destiny of the dead, some revived people report having seen the place in hell reserved for the agraristas working the land in Copujo (land belonging to Jarácuaro). Another report mentions having seen in hell people who were

773 still alive in town, and one particular man
775 who had been drowned in the lake was there wrapped in a blanket and dead drunk.

In the experiences of revived people, we also find the theme of coming back to the world in order to correct or help correct bad behavior:

[539] "A woman was dead for three hours. She was ordered to come back to this world in order to go to her son who had abandoned his wife and was living with another woman. She was ordered to tell her son that he should take his wife again and only then would he be forgiven and would he be able to reach purgatory. When the woman saw them living together again, she then died."

In another case the dead person has to come back to life in order to have the mass said which he had promised to Saint Francis.

Besides coming back to life, the dead appear to living persons in dreams or otherwise in order to ask them to correct their bad behavior. In one case a dead man appears to his friend and says:

[539] "Doroteo, Doroteo, don't be afraid. It's me, your friend Refugio. Come with me where I have my money. Hidden as it is, nobody profits from it and God does not want to forgive me because of that money which I have like that and nobody finds it. Come so that you can tell my wife and then you can take as much as you want."

The man (Doroteo) had almost decided to go but suddenly he was scared and ran away.

In another case, a married couple had
[428] adopted a boy. The man had promised to give him the kitchen as inheritance, but when the man died the woman did not give the kitchen to the boy:

[539] "She dreamed of her husband; she dreamed he was in hell and was taken to be burned. He told her it was her fault, that because she didn't give the kitchen to the boy they were taking him to be burned and that she should give it to him. Then an angel came and arranged the whole thing so he didn't go to the burning because he had repented. 'That's what I dreamed,' the woman says, 'and I think it's true.'"

A similar case is that of the dead bandit who had buried his money. His ghost keeps calling people to take the money and have some mass said for him.

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775 An interesting theme is that of the dead
773 who come back to earth in order to return stolen property. The following case is among the most significant, socially speaking, in our collection:

539 "There was a hacienda steward who was very good to the peons. He used to take handfuls of corn to give them, because at that time the people were very poor and he felt sorry for them. When he died he had no sins, so he went right to heaven, because the only sin he had committed was that of giving corn by handfuls to the peons without the permission of his master. God told him that was bad because he gave away the corn without his master's permission, and he would have to go back to earth to account for what he had done.

"So he fell in the center of the hacienda courtyard and he went to his house where he used to live and said, 'My children, here I am come back.' And his wife said, 'O my dear, how right you were to come back; you are the only one I love. Besides, everyone is unhappy around here because now there is nobody to give food to them like you used to do.' But then he said, 'Look here, I came only to attend to this; you should know what happened to me up there in heaven. I came to pay my master back so that God can forgive my sin. This is why I advise you not to do what I used to do but always act like the master tells you. Now I will have to go to the fields to pay my master back.'

"So he went to see his master, and said, 'Look here, sir, I used to take handfuls of corn and beans to give to the peons and this is why I missed heaven. Now you will have to put me to work so I can pay you back. And this is what God sent me to do, to tell you.'

"He was given the oxen and the plow and he spent all his time working. He never went to his home, and he never ate; nobody could see where he was or where he went, and he was always bareheaded. Until at last he fulfilled his debt to his master. Then he went again to his house and said, 'Now my children, I am through with my debts and I can go up again.' He went to a chapel of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and knelt and said, 'My Mother of Guadalupe, I have already paid this debt I owed my master. Let me go to heaven, show me the road, my Mother.' And the roof opened and he rose right to heaven; everybody could see him.

"And this is why they said it is such a great sin to take what does not belong to one."

775 In a similar story, the woman servant who
773 used to cheat her master had to come back and work for him again until she paid

773 him back. When the master found out what
775 had happened, however, he forgave her before she had redeemed her debt and she was able to go to heaven.

* * *

776 An outline of the nature of the saints
778 and of the main features of their cult has been given before. Most tales about the saints refer to apparitions and miracles.

The saint's image appears to some person who sees, hears, or dreams of it and calls the attention of the people. Often it is a shapeless piece of wood or stone in which someone imagines he sees a saint, usually Christ or a Virgin of Guadalupe. There are a number of such Guadalupes which usually draw only the personal devotion of the discoverer although sometimes more people bring flowers and candles to the stone. The apparitions of some famous saints are told in this same way. The saints, having gained recognition because of some miracle, are taken to the town's church, where later they are shaped into well formed images. Stones are interpreted as Virgins while Christs appear as pieces of wood which bleed when struck by an axe.

776 Saints occasionally wander on earth. The Virgin of Cocucho goes to Ocumicho after Saint Peter. Saint James in Azajo used to leave the church during the Revolution in order to fight. Saint Peter in Jarácuaro left the town when the people were split politically and the church was closed, and experiences are told of how he was seen in the hills or how he was seen on his way to Tarejero where he went.

776 Tales about the activities of the saints
789 refer mostly to their miracles, rewarding the good and punishing the evil. In answer to a vow offered by the devout, the saint can perform a miracle granting what was asked of him. Some of these miracles become elaborate stories like that of the man condemned to death by the agraristas and saved by Saint Peter. Or in the following two stories, saints saved the cargueros who had pledged their souls to the Devil in order to obtain money with which to make the festival:

539 "Once there was a lazy man. He had taken a cargo and the fiesta was coming closer and his wife said to him, 'Our fiesta day is coming and if you don't get busy, with what money are we going to make the fiesta? Well, how are we going to do it then?' 'Well,' he said, 'tomorrow I'll go out and see what I can find.' The

776 and some natural elements also are called demons. As there is only one word (*no-ambákiti*, evil one) both for the Devil and the demons, it is used sometimes as if the Devil were omnipresent, and at other times as if there were many different demons.

776 The Devil inhabits hell under the earth
778 where he rules over the doomed dead. He also attends "ugly" places—woods, caves, ravines, volcanos, the places where the
[772] pre-Christian giants were buried, etc. In these places the Devil appears. It is said that in those places "they frighten", because the appearance of the Devil causes fright. Places where the ancient people became enchanted are called *encanto* (enchanted place), and this name is used for all places where the Devil appears regularly at a given hour when music is heard or a peculiar-looking animal is seen.

776 The distribution of souls between God and the Devil has been mentioned. As the
775 Devil gets the wicked souls, that is, those who have sinned, his activities are directed
773 towards provoking bad behavior and thus winning souls for himself. The Devil goes after drunkards. Wherever there are drunkards, there is the Devil. He induces people to drink by appearing to them in human form. Or he persecutes drunkards in order to take them to hell with him, or mixes among them in order to make them fight. Similarly the Devil tries to make everyone quarrel and fight. Experiences are told of how one, while drunk, saw the Devil or how an animal (i.e., the Devil) was seen leaving a place where there was a fight.

Another way of getting souls is for the Devil to take the form of a woman and go after men. Many men tell experiences of this type. Going to see a sweetheart during the night, the boy suddenly realizes she has hairy hands or goat's feet, or some other beastly attribute which makes him realize that it is the Devil he is with. Walking in the streets during the night, one sees a pretty woman and follows her, but at a certain movement sees some of her beast-like features. The Devil disguised as a woman tries to take the man out of town and take him to some ravine or cave in the woods which is the way to hell. To women, the Devil appears as a rich man (*catrín*) who marries the girl, which means taking her to hell.

In these experiences of drunkards or lovers, the victim prays when he realizes

773 he is with the Devil. The Devil will leave
775 him because of his prayers, or else will be
776 unable to take the man with him because his intended victim has a relic of some saint.

Another way in which the Devil can get hold of a soul is by buying it. A man will pledge his soul (and sometimes also his children's) to the Devil in exchange for some gift, usually wealth or knowledge. This theme is one of the most common in Tarascan folklore (Tarascan, *pijɛakurin*, to make a pact with the Devil). Men most commonly sell their souls to the Devil in exchange for money. One meets the Devil, who is well dressed as a city dweller (*catrín*), and he promises to give money in exchange for the man's soul or that of one of his children. On the following night the man receives mules loaded with coins or he is taken to hell where he receives the money. In some cases, the man who has made a pact with
[825] the Devil receives an animal (Tarascan, *japíŋgua*), a sort of snake, which he keeps in a box and which excretes coins. Or else he receives a bull or sheep and then his animals grow very fast.

825 This concept, that an animal may be given by the Devil, merges with that of the
776 owner of the animals. Animals, in specific cases cattle and fish, are supposed to have a king or owner and if one gets hold of him, one can get as much of that species as one wants. This owner is also called *japíŋgua*. For some people it has no relation to the Devil. The owner of the fish is bigger than the common fish, swims at the head of the others and has a crown on its head. It can be seen but not caught. For many people, however, this japíŋgua is the Devil, and one can make a pact with him by which in exchange for his soul, the man will be lucky in fishing. Similarly, the japíŋgua of cattle is often spoken of as belonging to a rich man who has made a pact with the Devil.

Marrying a rich man also appears sometimes as a compact with the Devil.

754 Other than those of wealth, most pacts
776 with the Devil refer to witchcraft. Witchcraft is learned in this fashion: The novice has to go to a cave (usually taken there by another witch) where he (or more commonly she) has to spit on a Crucifix or perform some other sacrilegious act, finally meeting the Devil, who in exchange for his (her) soul gives the knowledge of witchcraft.

775 The evil dead who go to hell (or at least some of them) become devils or devil-like
776 spirits. This is an important concept in Tarascan folklore. We saw, for instance, how those people drowned in lakes or wells go to hell. Places where such accidents have happened are very dangerous because the drowned "pull people in, and cause canoes to capsize so that people drown". In some cases the water spirits died long ago in the past. They are mythi-
[773] cal characters, like the three daughters of the king of Tzintzuntzan, who were hidden in order not to see the blessing of the world; or the well spirits in the mountain towns, who discovered the springs but were plunged into the water by the people in the remote past. These spirits are called devils by informants, when asked about spirits' nature, and in some stories their devil-like attributes are clearly seen.

When a man has been murdered, a heap of stones is placed on the spot where the event took place. The stone on top of the head is marked with a cross and is called *krús ánimiri* (Tarascan from Spanish, cross of the soul). Anyone can put this soul to his service by getting hold of the cross. The cross is taken home and the soul haunts the house and scares intruders away. A soul's cross can be prayed to in order to ask the soul for help in getting a relative out of prison, or finding a lost animal.

778 The middle finger of a very brave dead man can also be used to put the soul at
775 one's service. The finger placed in front of a door has the virtue to open it, although one has to be brave enough to stand the sight of the dead man who appears on the door sill.

Many beliefs treat of hidden treasures. In one of these it is said that when a person wants to bury money to keep it secure, he kills a man or has one killed by somebody else and buries the dead man with his money. The dead man keeps the money, and frightens anybody who comes along. Only a very brave man could take the money out.

In the case of the soul's cross, the dead man's finger, or the dead man buried with money, it seems clear that we deal with the dead which do not reach their abode and are put to service by someone. In our material, however, this concept is not explicitly given. When asked about the nature of these dead persons, informants

183 havior against the interests of a certain class or institution.

(a) Among the behavior which is considered bad, we find activities which are harmful to the social body in general without regard to special group interests. Thus, drunkenness is incited by the Devil. He leads drunkards to disregard friends and family and to quarrel. The dead as a [775] consequence of drunkenness go to hell. In the same way, fighting is incited by the Devil and both the killed and the killer are doomed.

Behavior against the family and disapproved sex relations loom large under this heading. Rebelliousness against the [773] father (God, in this case) in the creation myths caused the Devil's damnation. Killing the father equally dooms the murderer in one story; and one of the causes for the outbreak of the volcano in Parícutin is said to have been punishment for a patricide which had happened there. Disobedience toward parental authority is also condemned in a prodigal son type of tale.

Deserting one's wife and living with another woman bar entrance into heaven. In a story where a man agrees to lend his wife to a friend, they are taken away by the Devil. Marriage between brother and sister among the mountain spirits occurs in one story, and their son is half snake, proof of his devilish nature. When blessed, they disappear amidst thunder and whirlwinds.

Cain, by killing his brother Abel, caused [773] the flood in one creation story. The *llorona* is the spirit of a woman who killed her son; she is condemned to wander on earth crying for her baby.

Failure to become godparents (*compadres*) according to proper custom is punishable by having to look for the other person after death in order to perform the ceremony. Similar punishment awaits the woman who does not take proper care of her children; she will have to do so after death.

Sex is a powerful bait the Devil uses to trap his victims, although not quite bad in itself. Thus the Devil appears as a seducing woman to draw men into the woods; or when a boy goes to see his sweetheart in the night, the Devil takes her form to catch him. A boy who used love magic powder loses his heart (i. *e.*, soul) to the Devil.

Disobedience to the father, killing the father, deserting the wife and living with

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183 as a beggar loses his wealth. He who fails
688 to make a promised pilgrimage dies in an accident. The man who does not pay for the mass he promised Saint Francis is sent back to earth after his death so he will fulfill his pledge.

A number of cases refer to Carácuaro, a place in the Tierra Caliente the Tarascans visit very often, where a famous Christ is venerated. The pilgrim who gets tired on the road and gives up the trip remains behind enchanted on a mountain. The woman who complains about the heat and does not want to go on, and the dancers who danced before they reach the town are punished by being turned to stone.

The punishment of sacrilege is a common theme. The revolutionary colonel who beats the Christ of Carácuaro becomes very sick and cannot die until he asks for pardon. The landowner who tries to dissuade his peons from going to church is burned with his cigarette. The men building a movie house in Pátzcuaro where formerly a church stood are subject to fatal accidents. Sacrilegious behavior of the agraristas is the cause of God's sending the volcano to Parícutin. According to different stories, they destroy a cross, steal the Holy Host, or throw an image of Christ to a bull.

The blessing given by the church is essential. Everything which has not its
[778] approval (blessing) is bad: animals which have been created by the Devil and not by God or the saints, and which consequently have not been blessed — coyotes, snakes, the fish taken from a pool which has not been blessed; money coming from the Devil; and of course the non-baptized.

The same theme occurs in myths. People
[173] who lived before the blessing of the world
[172] are bad; their ruins are haunted places and their idols are devils. Enchanted people are devils and have to be blessed by a priest before becoming normal beings.

Thus, Tarascan religious ideology and
183 folklore primarily sanction the values of
771 the folk culture. They support the family (understood in terms of local culture), attack witchcraft, defend private property and the proper observance of the folk religion. In their defense of poverty can be seen a defense of the Indian way of life. The money economy imposed from the outside is a disruptive influence in the village community, creating conflict within it or the loss of land to outsiders. The
[776] Devil giving money always appears as a

771 668 the folk religion and the content of folklore. Most people, however, show a certain degree of disbelief. Among some (2) this goes with criticism of the Church and with the acceptance of the rational point of view taught in school. This attitude can be correlated with the agrarista position in politics. Among many people (3) some items of lore and religion are doubted or dismissed but always under the acceptance of basic religious tenets and of Church authority. The trend is thus towards a greater orthodoxy within Catholicism, by abandoning beliefs of the purely folk level. This is paralleled by the militant Catholic position in politics.

These three attitudes are ideal types in terms of which we describe individual behavior. In reality they are not necessarily pure nor does every individual connected with a particular political tendency have in every way the attitude which we correlate with that tendency. Individual differences are determined not only by political affiliation but also by personality and cultural participation in general.

771 In order better to see the balance of change we will discuss first the traditionalist position. This represents the folk culture point of view of the village community.

In the formal aspects of religion, the more conservative, traditionalist individuals or towns attach greater importance to private rituals like those connected with agriculture or witchcraft. Also, the religion based on the folk cult of the saints is the most important. These people insist on the need to continue cargos and fiestas. They oppose the priests who attempt to change this and scorn Catholics who do not care for cargos. In the field of belief, total belief in religious concepts and tales corresponds to the above attitudes. Cargos are believed to be a way of serving God and the saints, necessary to reach heaven. [773] Myths are believed. Experiences with the supernatural are told as true happenings and even wonder stories are supposed to be true.

A few examples will illustrate this attitude:

539 Maximino tells how he has seen the Devil on two occasions, once as a woman and another time as a donkey. Once he discovered an attempt to bewitch him and in another case he caught a witch who had taken the shape of an owl. Once a heavy plank fell on him while he was building a house. He became unconscious

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539 and when he came to he tells how he has been dead in the other world but was sent back to life because his time had not yet come. Once in the night he was followed by a ghost trying to harm him. As a young man, he owned a dead man's finger which can be used to unlock doors. He did not want to tell the author the prayer which has to be said in order to use the finger. He did not want to have it published, because then people would use it and he would be responsible for their sins.

He thinks corn should be carefully handled; it's bad to throw it on the ground. "Corn is one's own life. That is what God Our Lord said: It is our Life. Adam sinned because Eve made him sin, and the Lord told him, 'Now you are going to work and sweat; take this adze, this spade, and this seed so that you can eat from your sweat.' When corn lies on the ground, it cries and that is not good. We mistreat it and that is bad, because it is our life, our food. Some people say they earn their living with their work, but that is only because God allowed us to be able to work. Were it not for that we would do nothing."

773 824 This explanation contrasts strongly with the attitude of other people who laugh when asked if it is bad for corn to lie on the ground.

Maximino draws morals from his stories:

[539] A man who tries to reach the end of the world dies very old before he can reach it. This teaches man that he should not attempt to learn certain things which are only God's. He tells the story of the rich man's son who leaves his house to become poor and has to be taken back home by his father. Also that of the man who tries to kill his wife he wrongly thinks unfaithful because of a friend's slander. She survives, dresses as a man, and manages to become king. Then she finds that her former husband, who has repented, has become the town drunkard.

Are these stories true? Of course; "these stories are real happenings which God allowed to happen in order that we might learn how to behave." (Mateo, on the other hand, tells this last story as fiction.)

539 Clemente tells how Saint Peter came to town descending from heaven. No doubt about it; his grandfather saw it.

Agustin tells how the ancients of Ihuatzio were enchanted and the treasures buried in the ruins. A boy had a chance to disenchant a girl and the money, but he failed when he could not carry to church the girl who had turned into

539 a snake. Agustin takes this very much to heart: "If that sucker had stood up, all the riches would be now his and the town's."

Pablo tells some story of the trickster, Pedro de Urdemalas. And he comments, "Those ancients were really clever, weren't they?"

771 Informants like Maximino, totally convinced of the truth of their stories, are
181 rather unusual. This attitude is found only in a few people, mainly old-timers.
178 Many informants have that same credulous attitude on many points, but some skepticism is also present. New attitudes away from total belief in folk ideas are found among most people, and those active in both agrarista or sinarquista movements share in them.

It appears that as the village community becomes increasingly part of the external world, greater acceptance of outside ideology sets in. When Indians are more drawn into the division of labor in the greater society, they begin to accept as part of this division of labor the fact that it is the outsider's job (Church, school, etc.) to rule on matters pertaining to ideology (religion, science, and so on). Unlike Maximino, who is sure of the truth of his stories, most people are full of doubts and when talking with the ethnographer express the idea that he (the ethnographer), as one coming from the outside, knows better than they do the answers to his questions.

821 "Who knows, really?" or "Who knows
812 what the truth is?" is a common answer to questions about the nature of the world, the sun, the moon, the volcano, and so on. Often people will confess their ignorance and ask questions in their turn. Sometimes they think it silly that such questions are put to them: "When will the volcano go out? Why! Even the geologists don't know." "How can we know the shape of the world? Some people of this town have never been even in Morelia [state capital]."

• 773 In relation to the different types of narratives we have described, the same process of change is apparent. Myths are sometimes doubted as perhaps not in keeping with the teachings of the Church. A complete creation myth, for instance, was recorded only after the informant, Mateo, had provided many other tales. When asked why he didn't tell this before, he answered, "I didn't think you would like it." "Is it true?" "Who knows, what do you think? I guess it is only a tale."

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771 is seen not only in their behavior but also
668 in the fact that their ideas about cargos
are changing. Whereas for the traditional-
ist, cargos are a necessary service to God
[782] in order to reach heaven, some Catholics
oppose this idea. They say it is only
custom, an unnecessary expenditure of
money, not required to be a good Catholic,
and they are supported by the priest.
When discussing this point, Manuel has a
ready argument: "Do you have cargos in
Mexico City? You don't have them
there, but people are still good Catholics."

[773] Myths and experiences with the super-
natural are usually believed, and some-
times even wonder stories, but the attitude
of doubt described before is also found.

Although agraristas or radicals dismiss folk beliefs as superstitions, the prevalent pattern by which folk beliefs disappear is not through lack of belief but by some sort of explanation within the accepted ideology as to why behavior based on the disappearing belief is not found any more. Thus we see in belief the same trend as in the cult, where the tendency is toward a more orthodox Catholicism. Examples follow:

539 In Zopoco there are no rich men because the town Christ "does not allow the *japíngua* to operate", i. e., compacts with the Devil.

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754 Jarácuaro used to be famous as a center of
778 witchcraft. Prospective witches entered a cave
behind the Church to make a compact with
538 the Devil and learn their art. The present lack
of witches is attributed to the fact that the
entrance to the cave has been covered: "Form-
erly there were witches because God allowed
it. Now he stopped it. What there are now are
some magicians who learn in books, but God
does not allow many of them. Otherwise with
so many books as there are, there would be
many magicians and all of them would be
causing evil."

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776 Elves are no longer seen because the Pope
539 condemned them together with other devils to
go back to hell; and they have not been seen
thereafter.

• • • •

821 In Cocucho there were many thunderstorms
539 over a certain mountain. "A priest went and
blessed a cave in the mountain. A thunder-
783 storm destroyed the cave. They said many
people were seen leaving the mountain; they

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INTRODUCTION

Prehistoric Tarascans, residing for centuries in the lake country of Michoacán, Mexico, asked questions about things around them. They asked why the land was sometimes flat, sometimes hilly, sometimes rich, and sometimes poor. They wanted to know why the precious waters of a spring suddenly erupted from beneath a tree on the hillside. They felt that the wonderful light-giving sun, the hurrying stream, the glittering stars, and the rustling leaves all required explanation.

Before the Spanish Conquest, the oral accounts of the *Petamuti* (high priest) explained the phenomena of nature through the great deeds of Tarascan gods and culture heroes. Knowledge of historical events was similarily preserved.

Some of these stories, to which Catholic and modern elements have been added, are still "history" to the native Tarascans living in isolated pueblos in the mountains. As with many people, it is what the Tarascans believe to be the historical truth, rather than the actual history itself, which most profoundly influences their thoughts and actions.

BACKGROUND OF THE LEGENDS

The Tarascan area has contracted since the time of the Spanish Conquest. Located approximately 250 miles northwest of Mexico City in the State of Michoacán, it centers in several geographic areas which form a fairly continuous block.

In the area around Zacapu (Fig. 1), traditional point of origin of the Tarascan dynasty, remain a few purely Tarascan villages. Bordering the Mexico City-Guadalajara highway a few miles northwest of Zacapu is a small, pleasant valley approximately a mile wide and six miles long. It is called La Cañada and in it nestle ten of the Once Pueblos of Pre-Conquest days.

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953)-1958
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nation and its princes. This account forms the principal part of the *Relación* and refers to the marvels of creation performed by their god, Curicaueri. The miracles of the creation are told in the countryside between Lake Pátzcuaro and Lake Cuitzeo as the tale of the birth of Cueróhperi.

The Legend

In the beginning of time there was no light. The silent dwelling place of Curicaueri, the only god at that time, was full of minute (atómica) material which slowly moved around without any order or harmony. Curicaueri realized that his enormous circular eyes could not penetrate the darkness nor contemplate infinity; therefore he created four orbs of light, each burning in one of the cardinal points of the universe, and light existed.

Great shapeless masses from the depths now were reflected in the eyes of the powerful god. From some of the mass, Curicaueri created Huriata, the sun god, naming him father and overseer of the universe. Then Huriata formed the heavenly bodies, ordering that they light the heavens in their own manner.

Thus day and night came into the world.

Through his golden mask Curicaueri smiled upon seeing the light of the four orbs, and, viewing the orderliness which Huriata had given to the universe, he desired to reward Huriata. Thus he created the moon goddess, Cutzi, and presented her to Huriata to take as his wife.

The contact of the two – Father Sun and the Mother Moon – brought darkness to the cosmos. From the two joined bodies, three rays of light broke forth upon the firmament to form three concentric circles around the dusky body of Cutzi.

From the three circles was born Cueróhperi (the creative principle or Mother Nature), the daughter whom Father Sun endowed with beauty and wisdom.

The three rays of light were extended through space, and they caused colors to be reflected from the heavenly bodies and the organized atoms.

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Curicaueri had created light; Cutzi and Huriata created harmony.

Curicaueri heard the hymn which the heavenly bodies intoned in their course through the sky. In addition, the slow, rhythmic beats of the atoms added to his conviction that his work was perfect. Retiring to his dwelling place amidst the four orbs, he sat upon his crossed legs and assumed a contemplative attitude. From this vantage point he beheld Cueróhperi, and, upon seeing how beautiful she was, he launched from his eyes four beams of light which shielded her from the sight of the world. One beam rested upon Cueróhperi's forehead, another upon her heart, another upon her hands, and the last upon her womb.

The daughter of Huriata felt herself pregnant. Below on earth, amidst the crashing of a furious tempest, she gave birth to the mountains, the seas, the lakes, the trees, and the flowers. Father Huriata and Mother Cutzi carefully attended Cueróhperi throughout her ordeal and afterwards maintained the closest vigilance over her, he by day and she by night. The gift of fertility which Curicaueri had given Cueróhperi made her always encumbered with the responsibility of deliverance.

Next she gave birth to the animals of the earth. Then came mankind, to whom she gave wisdom and the name of Purépecha.

The wisdom of the Purépecha was so great that they immediately began to govern the land with a knowing hand, cultivating and populating it in every direction. They created art and brought forth musical tones on magnificent instruments, such as the sweet-sounding ocarina and the sonorous *quiringua*. They painted with the colored plumes of birds, and they worked with stones to construct their dwelling place.

Very soon these men learned of their origin and displayed their gratitude to the gods by making sumptuous altars where they could worship the images of their gods. Curicaueri was represented as seated, with eyes and ears of the finest polished gold. They wished to denote that, in addition to being invisible, he had large eyes and ears in order to see and hear the sufferings of mankind. Besides this deity, the only things capable of seeing human beings

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were the four orbs residing in the heavens.

Huriata daily glittered in the sky, but the Purépecha represented him symbolically with three concentric circles which signified his union with the moon at the moment they created Cueróhperi. The lovely daughter of wisdom, Cueróhperi, was represented as standing nude with her long hair gathered in the form of a crown, with her hands resting beneath her breasts offering perpetual nourishment, and with her womb always ready to give forth fruit. In her they saw nature, to whose immutable laws all things are obedient.

Dance of the Viejitos

Related to the above legend is the still famous Dance of the Viejitos (little old men). It has its origins in the ancient past, but how old it is no one knows. Such a dance existed before the days of the Conquest, and the influence of the legend of creation is discernible in it.

The dancers of the Tarascan villages around Lake Pátzcuaro (Fig. 1) carry heavy staffs with an animal's head carved on the handle. They wear white cotton trousers, tunics with red sashes tied at the side, wide-brimmed hats with low crowns, and painted wooden masks depicting old faces.

The musician directs the dancing *viejitos*, usually youths, who dance collectively and individually, each trying to outdo the other in steps and clowning. In one of their serious figures, called "the cross of the four stars," the dancers form four files, each pointing in one of the cardinal directions. The four stars presumably represent the four orbs within which was the abode of Curicaueri.

In the little village of Petamba, sometimes as many as forty *viejitos* take part. One dancer wears a mask of a pretty white face, symbolic of Cutzi, the moon goddess (Locke, 1956, p. 372, illustrates this mask). The dancers form two files and each one dances with the woman wearing the white mask; then they form a great circle around her; next, in pairs, they pay reverential respect to